

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE :	Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
DATE:	16 February 2017
SUBJECT:	Annual Report of the School Progress Review Group
PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S):	Councillor Ken Hughes (Portfolio Holder – Life Long Learning)
HEAD OF SERVICE :	Delyth Molyneux (Head of Service - Learning)
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1.0 RECOMMENDATION

1.1 The committee is requested to note the report in respect of the work of the School Progress Review Group (the panel) during 2016.

2.0 REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

2.1 On the 10 July 2015 members of the panel gave consideration to the best way of reporting on their work and panel members concluded that the favoured way forward was for a report to be submitted to the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee.

2.2 On the 2 February 2016 a report on the work of the panel was submitted to the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee and it was actioned that thereafter the committee receives a report on a yearly basis.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 The panel was established on the 21 November 2012 by the Education and Leisure Scrutiny Committee. It arose from recommendations made by Estyn on the quality of Education services for children and young people on Anglesey. The aim of the panel is to assist the Education Service in improving the performance of schools on the Island, by increasing and developing local accountability for school performance and enhancing local members' knowledge about key performance drivers and challenges that face schools on Ynys Môn.

3.2 With the establishment of a new scrutiny committee structure during May 2013 it was agreed that members of the both scrutiny committees would continue with the work of the panel but designate it as an on-going scrutiny outcome panel. The terms of reference of the panel is to:

- Monitor the progress of individual schools;
- Learn from good practice;
- If it deems appropriate, make recommendations to the Portfolio Holder for learning and Head of Learning.

3.3 The panel included consists of the following elected members:

- Councillor Meirion Jones
- Councillor Gwilym Jones
- Councillor Alun Mummery
- Councillor Lewis-Davies
- Councillor Richard Owain Jones
- Councillor Dylan Rees
- Councillor Jim Evans

3.4 The Head of Learning and the Senior School Standards and Inclusion Manager provides guidance to the panel about which schools should be invited. The criterion used to select schools is based on the national school categorisation framework, school performance and Estyn reports and the aim is to have a good mix of small, medium, large and primary/secondary schools. It is emphasised that the decision as to which school is invited to appear before it lies solely with the panel. The panel can invite schools to reappear before them if there are matters that need to be revisited at a later date.

3.5 During 2016 the panel has met on the following occasions :

<u>Date</u>	<u>School</u>
22 January 2016	Ysgol Llangoed
22 January 2016	Ysgol Llaingoch
11 March 2016	Ysgol Bodedern
11 March 2016	Ysgol Llanfairpwll
20 May 2016	Ysgol Bodorgan
20 May 2016	Ysgol Dwyran a Niwbwrch
8 December 2016	Planning Session

3.6 Members of the panel receive a significant amount of confidential information at meetings. Information includes academic and attendance performance data, finance

and staffing/management information. Information is securely shared with panel members as it is deemed sensitive or confidential in its nature. A formal “minute” is taken at each meeting which is shared with relevant officers at the Learning Service.

3.7 The Head teacher, Chairperson of Governors and the relevant GwE (Regional School Improvement Service) Challenge Adviser are invited to attend panel meetings in to discuss attainment standards, inclusion issues, attendance and the management of resources which includes financial and management aspects.

4.0 MAIN MESSAGES IN 2016

4.1 All the schools that appeared before the panels in 2016 have their own history, are of varying size and are located throughout the island.

4.2 It is problematic, and fraught with difficulty, to draw generic conclusion from what was gleaned from school representatives that appeared before the panel and apply it all the schools on the island. Having said that, certain matters appeared pertinent to all schools on the island, and it would be fair to highlight these points as the main messages identified by the panel during 2016. They are as follows:

- Schools worked well with GwE and were complimentary about the quality of support provided. All schools had evidence of using development / improvement plans to address areas of weak performance and prioritise actions to improve performance.
- Schools worked well with other schools on the island in order to share good practice, but one school expressed disappointment at the effectiveness of the local scheme.
- Under the Welsh Government’s colour-coded school ratings ranking system some schools were categorised better than others, but all are committed to improve educational standards for all learners.
- School representatives that attended the panel were open in identifying weaknesses in school performance and were able to provide a cogent explanation of why this was the case e.g. increase in the cohort numbers who have identified special needs, pupils with less developed Welsh language skills or vacant posts that needed to be filled.

- Schools referred to recruitment difficulties in finding experienced teachers and head teachers to fill vacant posts. Some schools had reservations concerning the possible introduction of a national recruitment agency to fill temporary posts, but others considered that the recruitment process was not at fault but was more of a reflection of a national problem concerning the limited pool of experienced teachers willing to fill vacant temporary posts and head teacher posts, particularly through the medium of Welsh.
- Schools are well regarded in their community.
- There remains support of religious education and its importance in developing positive social and behavioural values.

6.0 NEXT STEPS

6.1 On the 8 December 2016 the panel met to agree on a schedule of schools to be invited during 2017. The panel was keen to invite a broad mix of schools. The newly appointed “Senior School Standards and Inclusion Manager” is due to start in her post in January 2017, and the schools selected will be invited to appear as soon as possible thereafter.

6.2 As financial austerity will impact more on schools over the next few years, it is important that the panel have an opportunity to consider the effectiveness of schools’ use of resources, and schools’ success in reducing staff absenteeism and its resultant negative effect on standards.

Author: Joint Report by Delyth Molyneux (Head of Service - Life Long Learning) and Geraint Wyn Roberts (Scrutiny Officer).

Date: 19 January 2017